

Amendments to the Specification:

Please add the following new paragraph after the paragraph ending on line 17 of page 3:

FIG. 1A is a front view of the thread cassette which is provided with an opaque lid for closing an opening of the cassette;

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 19, line 19, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The above-described embodiment may be modified as follows. The needle thread 20 accommodated in the thread cassette 24 may or may not be wound on a core member such as the thread spool 34. The thread cassette 24 may or may not be provided with the walls surrounding the thread spool 34 only if the thread spool 34 is accommodated therein. The walls surrounding the thread spool 34 may be transparent or translucent. The thread cassette 24 may be provided with a lid 68 (as shown in FIG. 1A) closing the opening thereof. The lid 68 may be opened so that the thread spool 34 is inserted into and taken out of the thread cassette 24.